

**REMARKS**

Claims 1, 3, 7, 10 and 13 have been amended. Claims 2, 4-6, 12 and 14-21 have been canceled without prejudice. No claims have been added.

The Examiner indicated that claims 6-8, 12 and 13 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, Applicants have amended the rejected base claims associated with each of these groups of claims to include substantially all the limitations of the corresponding objected to claims and any intervening claims. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 3, 7-11 and 13 are in condition for allowance.

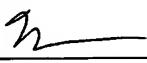
The Examiner rejected claims 18-21 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which application regards as the invention. The Examiner rejected claims 1-4, 10, 11, 14, 15 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Lopata, U.S. Patent No. 6,265,941. The Examiner rejected claims 9 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lopata, U.S. Patent No. 6,265,941. In view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that these rejections have been obviated. Applicants may pursue the rejected claims in a continuation.

It is respectfully submitted that in view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein, the rejections and objections have been overcome. Applicants reserve all rights with respect to the application of the doctrine of equivalents. If there are any additional charges, please charge them to our Deposit Account No. 02-2666. Applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

BLAKELY SOKOLOFF TAYLOR & ZAFMAN LLP

Dated: 1/27, 2005

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael J. Mallie  
Reg. No. 36,591  
Tel.:(408) 720-8300  
12400 Wilshire Boulevard  
Seventh Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90025-1026